

The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE 1933-1934

It is the privilege of the secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to present her annual report for 1933-1934. During this time she has endeavored to perform the duties incident to the office.

Mrs. Harry A. Stevens, the chairman, has presided at the annual meeting and at the eight regular meetings, held at 25 Beacon Street, Boston on the first Friday mornings of the months from October to May inclusive. That Mrs. Stevens' manner of conducting these conferences appeals to near-by Branch chairmen is evidenced by the fact that, despite the almost uniformly disagreeable weather upon the days when they were held, the average attendance at them has been 49 and the average number of Branches represented has been 31. 52 Branches have been represented at least once. The Exchange has been honored by the presence of Mrs. Thomas G. Rees, president of the General Alliance, Miss Bertha Langmaid, secretary of the same body, and Miss Louise Brown, its treasurer, and several directors at some of its meetings. 17 Branch presidents accepted special invitations to attend the regular May meeting, at which reports for the year were read by Committee chairmen.

If a secretary's annual report could be based upon a text, a thought given to the Exchange by Miss Langmaid might well furnish it. She quoted: "*Together* is the most inspiring word in the English language. Coming together means a beginning; keeping together means progress; working together means success." As your secretary has read and considered the reports, which have come from near and far, she is more

than ever impressed by what has been accomplished by many working together.

The names of the following Branch chairmen, who have been called home and with whom their fellows are no longer privileged to work, are held in grateful memory: Miss Edith Hounsell of Santa Ana, California, Miss Margie Sampson of Duxbury and Miss Abbie F. Jones of Greenfield, Massachusetts.

During the past year five members of the Central Committee have addressed Branches in the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New Jersey as well as Massachusetts. May your secretary again advise each Branch to plan a *Cheerful Letter Day* with a speaker from Headquarters once in every few years; in her experience there is no surer way to stimulate constructive interest.

Mrs. Stevens, the chairman of the Exchange, in her annual report announces her willingness to "be ready at all times to counsel, advise or assist, when called upon." She mentions three interesting incidents, resulting from the mailing of stray copies of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. One mailed from Michigan to a wheel chair invalid in Nebraska brought an offer from the latter to send to other unfortunates reading matter, given to her, if postage money could be supplied. She has been one of your workers for three years and during the last she has answered 137 appeals from your magazine. A second mailed from Nebraska to Philadelphia "brought not only an offer to answer a few appeals each month but also inquiries about Unitarianism." Leaflets sent the inquirer have interested her so much that

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October 3, 1917, authorized July 17, 1922."

she, a self-styled back-sliding Evangelical, is going to look up the Unitarian Church. A third mailed "from Lowell to New Hampshire brought a request for extra copies of the February issue, containing the sermon, 'The Value of Mended Things,' which had helped the reader so much that he wanted to share it with his friends." He also offered to give some useful books to one of our school teachers. Mrs. Stevens stresses the value of the co-operation of Dr. Robert C. Dexter of the Unitarian Association, through whose office many inquiries are made and answered in regard to far-away correspondents, apparently so desperately poor as to need help from welfare agencies. In some cases such help has been given by local organizations, while in others it has been shown that the poverty of far-away correspondents has been exaggerated in their letters. Workers are thus able to help their correspondents receive needed material aid without breaking the rule of the Exchange by supplying it themselves.

Mrs. William B. Nichols, a past chairman of the Exchange shows her interest in its efforts by taking charge of the distribution of Bibles. This year 52 Bibles and 16 Testaments have been sent to applicants. Many of them were new. There is a steady call for Bibles printed in large type. If you all will work *together* to locate and send as many as possible during the coming year under the direction of Mrs. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass., the efficiency of her department will be greatly increased. Each Branch might very possibly find one member whose household

possessed and was willing to donate a suitable Bible, and another member who would pay the necessary postage to send it. Will you not all make this one of your aims for another year?

In the Fall the Exchange was fortunate in persuading Mrs. Charles P. Dillaby to assume the chairmanship of the Home Study Department, left vacant temporarily because of the illness of Mrs. Isaac Sprague, Jr. In an attempt to avoid duplication the work of this department has, as Mrs. Dillaby states in her annual report, been "reorganized so that the home study group is the actual contact between an applicant studying at home and a teacher helping by correspondence. We have been fortunate in placing 29 applicants, who are working with 23 teachers in 12 subjects. It is rather interesting to note the subjects in which we have been able to give help. We have one pupil each studying botany, German, Greek, history, home economics, shorthand and bookkeeping, and first year high school subjects; two studying French; three each studying journalism and story writing, and music; four studying drawing; and ten studying English. The teachers are located as follows: one each in Alstead Centre, Charlestown and Keene, New Hampshire; while Massachusetts supplies four in Boston, one in East Lexington, three in Lexington, one in Roslindale and one in Taunton. Hartford, Connecticut, provides two. Outside of New England we have two in New York City, while New Jersey has responded well with one in Glen Ridge, two in Montclair, one in North Plainfield and one in Rutherford. One teacher is working with four pupils in drawing, another with three in music, a third with two in French and a fourth with two in high school subjects. We number two gentlemen among our teachers. Reports come of satisfactory progress made by students, while many of the teachers find the work profitable and interesting.

"When application has been made for instruction in a particular course and no teacher has been immediately avail-

able, we have sent books on the desired subject, asking the patience of the would-be pupil until we can find help. Thirty books have been sent in this way and only three correspondents have failed to acknowledge the receipt of the books on the enclosed post card. An ambitious family in Virginia consists of a mother studying botany, a girl taking up journalism and a boy being helped in drawing. Through this group we have found a young woman to help with shorthand. Our thanks are extended to all who have assisted in the furtherance of our work."

May your secretary remind you of what constructive work can be done, if your groups all over the country work *together*. If each Alliance will either provide a teacher or undertake to supply a prospective pupil with his books, the impetus given Home Study work will be inestimable. There was never a time when it was harder for worthy boys and girls to get the education for which they crave. You have the opportunity to help some of these young people, who because of poverty, physical handicaps, heavy home cares or isolation cannot attend school regularly. Mrs. Dillaby at the monthly conferences has stressed that experience is not necessary for a person to become a satisfactory instructor, teaching by mail. Surely you are not going to fail these ambitious young people.

Mrs. John A. McCaddin, chairman in charge of Appeals and the Assigning of Correspondents reports a radical change in the organization of her department. All files of correspondents' names and addresses and of Branch assignments have been transferred from her home to 25 Beacon Street, where it is possible for her to have help in handling the endless detail of her work. Mrs. Bucek of the Central Committee spends one day a month working with her and another assistant prepares the lists of appeals for the magazine and sends for the references of would-be correspondents from their ministers.

Mrs. McCaddin has selected from letters 197 appeals, which have this year

been published in the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. In her annual report she states, "Many and varied are the requests. We have been asked to send pieces of all kinds for quilts, sugar and salt bags for their linings, and thread to sew them with by people who are 'bare of quilts.' Appeals reach us for 'reading to cheer up women, who have lost some one dear' or for 'something for the children to help in their school work.' Books, paper, pencils and crayons are sent to further the education of children in States which do not provide such supplies in public schools. 46 additional appeals for quilt scraps have been distributed at monthly meetings.

"Many new names, after satisfactory references have been received, have been added to our lists and 140 such have been distributed to 54 Branch chairmen for regular correspondents. When names are assigned to new committees or chairmen, I have explained the possibilities of the work and in each letter I have enclosed a list of articles, which may properly be sent to correspondents. Many new teachers' names have been added to our lists and as a result of questionnaires sent them by Miss Allen of the Central Committee valuable information about their needs has been obtained and an attempt has been made to make the distribution of material to them more equitable.

"I have kept the files up to date, making all known changes of address. I wish to thank all the chairmen, who have helped."

The routine work, which Mrs. McCaddin handles so efficiently, is not spectacular; yet it is responsible for much that the Exchange accomplishes. Here is another opportunity for you to work *together*. Won't you all resolve that next year you will report promptly to her all changes of address and deaths of correspondents; that you will also inform her of the chronic beggar, who should be dropped from your lists in order that another, grateful for what you may legitimately send, may be added

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

MRS. JOHN A. MCCADDIN, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

A correspondent writing to the Exchange for the first time should always give as reference the name and address of her minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

APPEALS

1. Mrs. Ethel Pennington, Rt. 2, Saltville, Va., would appreciate something to read, also quilt pieces. Some trouble with her back keeps her in bed a good deal and the time seems so long to her.
2. I have enjoyed the *Cheerful Letter* so much and thank the one who sends it to me. I also appreciate the cards and magazines. Has anyone "Better Homes and Gardens" or any floral magazine to pass on? I have been a wheel chair invalid for twelve years, crippled with arthritis. Mrs. Nora R. Colley, Brookneal, Va.
3. Mrs. S. G. Clay, Rt. 3, Murphy, N. C., writes asking for good books and magazines, also anything of interest for little girls ages 3 and 7 and boys 11-13 and 17 yrs. old.
4. I am a new member and a newly married woman. I am going to housekeeping soon and need some quilts. Would someone please send me some scraps and embroidery material? My husband likes any kind of reading matter. Mrs. Vada Segraves, Rt. 2, Marion, Va.
5. Mrs. H. C. Brown, Rt. 1, Forest-

- burg, Tex., lives a long way from church, school and town. Four children are in school but the oldest boy, 14, has to help support the family. She has several quilts started but has run out of pieces so could make good use of scraps. She would be glad to get reading matter.
6. I was just wondering if someone would send me some cheer. I live out in the country and get very lonesome. I have a baby boy 9 mos. old. I should be grateful for short ends of thread and stamped pieces, also quilt scraps. Mrs. Ray Roland, Clifton, N. C.
7. Mrs. Eda Greer, Box 37, White Top, Va., is a lonely widow living five miles back in the mountains with her son (who is almost an invalid) and his four children. They love cards and story books. Quilt scraps, bits of embroidery and thread would be much appreciated.
8. I have seven children and have been suffering with heart trouble for over two years. My husband lost his hand a year ago and has cancer of the stomach so is unable to work. I cannot send my children to school

because they have no books. I would love to receive reading and quilt material as we are badly in need of quilts. Mrs. S. J. Reid, Rt. 3, Spencer, Va.

9. Mrs. J. H. Hardester, Rupert, Ark., wishes to receive quilt scraps, rug material, or any kind of cheer, as she gets lonely while the children are in school.
10. I could make good use of anything in the sewing line which anyone cares to send me. I have six children, the oldest girl being 16 yrs. old. I am not strong and hardly ever go anywhere. Mrs. Emma Greer, Grayson, N. C.
11. For seven years I have been in ill-health so cannot do any heavy work. I am writing to ask if someone will send me some magazines or books of adventure for my three boys, the youngest being 12 yrs. old. I shall be so glad of quilt scraps, stamped pieces, embroidery thread, just anything to keep my hands and mind busy. Mrs. Ella Daniel, Rt. 1, Box 76, Kingsland, Ark.
12. Mrs. J. L. Slawter, Callahan, Fla., wants to thank the *Cheerful Letter* friends for their kindness to her and her family, especially at Christmas. Reading for herself, husband and children would be appreciated; also a doll would make her 8 yr. old very happy. She enjoys making rugs out of old hose, and doing fancy work. Last summer she had malaria fever and her husband is crippled in his right leg.
13. Will someone please send me some reading and quilt scraps? I sure will be glad as I live out in the country and get very lonely as I am old and can't get out to do any work to pass off the time. Mrs. Sarah Spears, Rt. 4, Marshville, N. C.
14. Miss Ida Haynes, Woolwine, Va., is 19 yrs. old and keeps house for her father and two brothers, 16 and 11 yrs. old. Her father has lost the use of one hand as a result of blood poisoning. She would like some

quilt pieces and bits of embroidery as she gets lonesome since her mother died.

15. I should like to receive books, cards, magazines or scraps. I have three girls and one boy. We live on a farm far away from church, school and town, and are not able to buy reading matter. Mrs. Annie Turner, Rt. 1, Norwood, N. C.
16. It would bring much cheer and help to me, as I am kept at home most of the time with my invalid mother, if someone would be kind enough to send me bits of crochet and embroidery thread, patterns, or anything to help pass the lonely hours away. Lois Garner, Kingsland, Ark.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- Mrs. Ella Simmons from Malakoff, Tex., to R. F. D. 1, Athens, Tex.
 Mrs. S. G. Clay from Jacksonville, Ala., to Rt. 3, Murphy, N. C.
 Mrs. Nora R. Colley from Clarkton, to Brookneal, Va.
 Mrs. J. H. Hardester from Rex, to Rupert, Ark.
 Miss Ida Haynes from Elansville, to Woolwine, Va.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE FOREST

DOUGLASS MALLOCH

I love the man who loves the wood,
 Whate'er his creed, whate'er his blood.
 I may not know his native land,
 His creed I may not understand;
 But, when we meet within the wood,
 There each is silent—understood.
 We worship then at selfsame shrine;
 We see the same celestial shine
 On lustrous leaf, on petaled flower;
 We feel the selfsame grace and power;
 Yea, walking on the selfsame sod,
 We worship both the selfsame God.
 I give who loves the wood my hands,
 For here is one who understands;
 Who loves the wood I give my heart,
 For these responsive echoes start;
 We meet in this sweet brotherhood—
 We meet as Brothers of the Wood.
 We are laborers together with God.

ANNUAL REPORT OF SECRETARY

(Forward from page 15)

to them. By all means let her know whenever your committees can assume responsibility for more correspondents.

Mrs. Henry R. Bowser, chairman of the Library Department reports that she has been busier than usual in placing books. She feels that the sum total of volumes added to libraries is disappointing. To be sure the 4,587 books, distributed this year, are fewer than what have been sent recently but the number of magazines, given for the same purpose, 10,988 is greater than usual. She writes that "the bright spot is that a good number of Branches have been at work. 37 Branches have sent volumes to 30 school and 54 community libraries, 10 of which are new, in 16 States and 2 Provinces of Canada. This means that the cause of the drop is not lack of interest but the depression. The chairman of the committee for All Souls' Branch, New York City has sent 300 more books than last year. The Branches sending the greatest number of books follow, listed in order of the number given: All Souls', New York City, Wellesley Hills, Montclair, N. J., Nashua, N. H., Roxbury First, Jamaica Plain and Brewster.

"It has taken as much work on my part to arrange for the placing of a shipment of 25 books from a Branch this year as it used to do the same for 200 books. It is encouraging that several new schools have been properly cared for, chief among them a new county high school in Georgia in charge of an enterprising and eager superintendent. Unfortunately other schools have received only a few or no books.

Your secretary feels that the Library Department has made a creditable showing for present conditions. She reiterates that *working together means success*. If 37 Branches can send an average of 124 volumes each in their united effort, she is amazed at the possibility of what might be done, if all the other Branches reporting joined to help in this good work. One of your librarians writes, "It seems to me that the

supplying of good reading matter to people who need it is more important than giving them food or clothing. Poor people manage to get the necessities but they skimp on books, until they do not even realize they are missing everything. So higher ideals and broader outlooks on life, that might have come from reading good books, are forever denied them." If all Alliance members working *together* would feel some responsibility about sharing some of the good books, which their households never read, with the people who live in lonely, out of the way places and who cannot afford ever to purchase any, your libraries would flourish as never before.

It is not alone your workers, who demonstrate the truth of the statement that *keeping together means progress*. A correspondent in an isolated section of Kentucky writes thus, "I do wish to say that I receive and appreciate the little magazine, *The Cheerful Letter*, and when I am through, I pass it to another shut-in, who promises to do likewise, when she is through herself. Neither is able to pay for the same; so I feel that your good work goes on. Now I have in mind two dear ladies, who are much alone and aged and who would appreciate having the little paper. If there should be room on the list for these dear old ones, who have not any relatives as to my knowing, I will so much thank you for including them in your mailing list each month."

It is letters similar to this one, showing that the recipients of the magazine not only enjoy it but share it with others, which spur the members of your central committee to stress the need of the collections from the sunshine bags. The money, so collected, augments the modest sum, paid for subscriptions, and makes it possible to continue to edit, publish and mail the magazine, while money given by numerous Branches for the definite purpose sends the magazine to men and women, who cannot afford to take it but prize it. Alliances, working together with the common end in view of financing the magazine have given gen-

erously through the sunshine bags. The Branches on the honor roll for the large-est amounts donated include All Souls, New York, Dorchester First and King's Chapel of Boston, whose gifts are very nearly equal, with West Newton, Boston First and Roxbury in the next places. But it is the team work of the smaller groups, which have given according to their ability, which has made the whole movement successful.

Your secretary wishes to thank each chairman, who sent her annual report; she regrets that it is impossible to acknowledge each of these personally. She hopes that the blank forms helped to make the task a little easier. When she considers each individual effort recorded, she is more than ever convinced that many workers agree with one, who writes, "I find *Cheerful Letter* work my most satisfying effort." She is also reminded of the title of a talk, which Mrs. Brush of the Central Committee recently gave; namely, "Transforming Trash into Treasures" and is certain that, while Mrs. Brush's report shows her to be a past mistress of that art, there are many other women in your group who have the same ability.

Did you ever think that to be a successful worker in your line you must possess some artistic temperament, some imagination? You will feel no thrill, if like the man of whom the poet wrote, "A primrose by the river's brim, a yellow primrose was to him and it was nothing more," a pile of quilt scraps is to you a bundle of new rags and nothing more. But if in fancy you visualize the Dutch doll quilt, which is so popular with many of your correspondents and which your contribution is going to make possible, or if you imagine the mandarin coat, which an invalid worker in Nebraska has fashioned with intricate skill from silk bits sent her and which has been exhibited in Boston, or if in your mind's eye you see the *Joseph's coat*, which a young correspondent of the Waltham Branch has pieced out of velvet scraps and which is her only outer garment, you will know the romance of

having your own trash transformed into treasure. No one can measure the pleasure, which has gone to distant friends, as they have received packages of quilt scraps and sewing materials,—a record number. These bundles have made possible busy hands, employed in making useful and beautiful things. Surely here is another case of many groups *together* supplying tangible cheer. Your vision further may show you Alliance women, working to make quilts, along with their distant correspondents. From Framingham Centre comes this word, "My correspondent is particularly interested in making quilts and an elderly lady here with a kindred interest has just sent her sufficient number of beautiful silk pieces for an entire quilt." *Together* is an inspiring word.

Have you ever tried to imagine yourself living as do some of your correspondents and to consider what letters and reading matter from some one outside your immediate vicinity would mean to you? The following excerpts taken from some letters may help to make you see their lives. A correspondent of the chairman for Salem Second Branch writes from North Carolina: "Last night it wind snowed; today has been piercing cold. The Blue Ridge is covered with snow. We have closed our fire place and bought a second hand stove. We have our first fire in it tonight. I think we'll like this. It takes less than one quarter the wood, it does for a fire place and we'll be warmer." A correspondent of the Leominster Evening Branch living in Virginia gives the information that, "I haven't been out all winter only to town one time. We live miles out in the most out of the way place around and on a terrible road. I hardly ever see any one except the two nearest neighbors' families; so I get very blue and lonely some times. My address is changed as they have done away with our post office." A Virginia correspondent of the chairman for Community Church, New York City, writes, "I hardly ever get to go anywhere unless it is to see some one that is sick. I wish I

might see the pictures of which you write. I have never been to any kind of a show or even heard a radio except listening a few times over our telephone to one. So you know I am green." A North Carolina correspondent of the Tyngsboro Branch describes her condition in some such way as this, "You must forgive me for not having written to you. To tell the truth I haven't had the pennies to mail a letter with. Do you have plenty of water in your well? Ours is most dry. We have to go to the creek and haul water to do the washing. The creek water is right yellow and it makes the clothes look bad. My oldest boy will be seventeen in February; he is a high, slim boy. The next two boys are larger than I and look like twins. The fourth one is ten years old and small. The two little boys look like twins, although there is eighteen months between them. They will all go to school this winter. I don't feel like I can stay at home, it will be so lonesome but I guess I will get used to it. I will have them with me at night. My how they like to read and how hard it is to get any books for them!" An Arkansas correspondent of the Amherst Branch writes, "All my life I expect to work, work, work!"

It is the hope of your secretary that the next time you see thrust away on a shelf a readable book, which you and your children have ceased to enjoy, you will also see in fancy some of these isolated, under-privileged families to whom it will mean much more than just something to read and that you will mail it to one of them. Chairmen have reported sending 2,670 books to individuals. Added to those sent to libraries these make a total of 7,257, a very creditable showing for these times and mute evidence of what can be accomplished by many working together. From Kalamazoo, Michigan, comes this expression of gratitude from a correspondent, "I enjoy most any kind of a good book. Miss Irene sent me several. I've read all of them a dozen times and lent them to my friends."

37,413 magazines have been dis-

tributed to individuals this year. With those sent to libraries these make a total of 40,984.

Not all these magazines have gone to people at great distances. The chairman for the Quincy Branch, for example, has "delivered 225 magazines to homes in Quincy since last November. They are greatly appreciated, as the present times have forced many people to give up their subscriptions to the periodicals, which they enjoy most." Your secretary suggests that every Branch distribute some magazines in this way.

274 subscriptions to magazines other than the *Cheerful Letter* have been sent directly from the publisher to far-away friends. The chairman for the Ayer Branch explains the advantage of this method thus, "It is hardest to find reading matter, the cost of sending which does not exceed its value. I send a subscription to the Woman's Home Companion instead of forwarding copies. I enclose in my letters interesting clippings to such an amount as will not increase the postage." A correspondent of the Somerville Branch expresses her appreciation of this method thus, "I greatly appreciate having 'Better Homes and Gardens' come every month. Many of the younger mothers and even their husbands around me like to borrow it and get ideas from it." And here is another case of several groups in one far-away community getting *together* to share a good magazine and surely progress follows.

No one can estimate the pleasure, which results from the myriads of cards and clippings sent by *Cheerful Letter* workers. A correspondent of the Branch at Peterboro, New Hampshire, has broken her hip. She writes in this wise, "I keep the bunch of cards you sent on my bed and look at them often. Your calendar has its place against my pillow where I look at it constantly. So you see I have these reminders that some one thinks and cares for me." The Chairman for Manchester, New Hampshire, reports that she has "listed all the birthdays of her correspondents and on

that day of days a greeting goes forth to cheer and bless."

The use of clippings is too varied for detailed consideration. Two suggestions only will be given. The Roslindale chairman cuts and sends short stories from magazines, the pictures of which are used for scrap books. The chairman from Nashua, New Hampshire, "saved cross word puzzles from various newspapers and pasted two each upon pieces of card-board. These were very acceptable at the hospitals in town. They were not heavy or cumbersome for a patient to hold, yet firm enough to write upon. Forty were taken to one hospital on trial and found to be much enjoyed. Many more are being prepared."

At Christmas *Cheerful Letter* committees reach the height of working together and enlisting the help of outsiders. This team work resulted in the sending of 1,237 holiday boxes, a substantial increase over last year's number. A tremendous amount of labor as well as a very considerable sum of money was expended in the preparing, packing and despatching of the thousands of gifts, which these boxes contained. A vast number of people, who otherwise would not have celebrated Yuletide at all, were through them given a happy day. Their contents were varied. Many school trees were decked from them. One sent by the Roxbury Branch contained at the request of a Kentucky school teacher 22 tubes of tooth paste, 32 emery boards, 18 orange wood sticks, 18 thimbles, 16 pairs of scissors, yarn and picture puzzles. The children receiving these gifts were to be taught a few of the niceties of living. The teacher in Georgia to whose school Newton Channing Branch sent a box writes that she ties strings to each article and places them in a big box. The children each draw a string, which pleases them. They live in a poor farming community and would have had nothing for Christmas but for the *Cheerful Letter* gifts and the candy the teacher gives them. These same children, eleven years old and over, were much excited in February when the

trees were covered with ice and snow, as they had never seen any snow before. Bridgewater Branch found a small school in New England that needed help at Christmas time. Its chairman procured a list of the names and ages of the children and was able to give each child three suitable gifts, nicely wrapped and tagged, and also to send something to the teacher. Many boxes went to families or to individuals. From Detroit, Michigan, the chairman writes, "Perhaps the most genuine pleasure was given to a little girl, five years old to whom I sent a doll. She had never had any doll except a rag one made by her sister with whom I correspond. Her joy was unbounded and still continues." From Winchendon comes the report, "There were 41 appeals in the December *Cheerful Letter* and our minister's wife and another member of our Alliance answered every one by sending 41 packages of quilt scraps, embroidery materials, thread, dolls, Christmas cards, ribbons, puzzles, games and toys. They received 32 replies and to those who answered our Junior Alliance sent valentines."

Grateful correspondents frequently show their appreciation in tangible form. To Hubbardston Branch Katy, their beloved North Carolina friend, whose trip to New England is the "sweetest memory of her life" sent a box of holly before Christmas. The *Cheerful Letter* chairman with her Sunday School class "distributed a lovely bunch of this holly with a Christmas card attached to every shut-in and to every sick and old person in the village." Isn't this a beautiful example of the happiness which comes from doing things together? Some unusual tokens were received; to the chairman in Passaic, New Jersey, came a box of hard boiled eggs from Virginia, to a Lexington worker came peanut vines from Texas, while to the chairman in Uxbridge were sent some home dried peaches from North Carolina.

Your secretary feels that perhaps she has overemphasized what the Exchange has been doing in its distribution of material things. The writing of letters

still has a very important place in its activities. That the thousands of epistles mailed this year have been worth while may be seen from the following expressions of appreciation taken at random. A young woman wrote to the chairman for the Jamaica Plain Branch, "I'd just rather get your letters than anything." An Arkansas woman wrote to the chairman for the Evening Alliance of Greater Boston, "I was sure glad to get such a long, friendly letter, as I get so terribly lonesome here." To the chairman for the West Newton Branch came this word from a North Carolina woman, "You certainly have been a good faithful friend of mine, one who never fails. If you should stop writing me, what would I do?" And to the chairman for the Ware Branch a North Carolina wife, who has just celebrated her golden wedding, wrote, "I just received your sweet letter a day or so ago. Thank you for the verses. I shall keep them for my grandchildren to read. Do write again soon. I think of you as a dear old friend."

Letters have carried both practical and spiritual help to correspondents. When the West Roxbury chairman learned that a family had lost a poor, sick mother just before Christmas, she wrote to advise the children to go into the woods for a tree. She sent trimmings and gifts for each and they wrote that they had a happier day than they had imagined possible, because they had been busy as she suggested. An elderly woman on the Waltham list took to her bed, where she was sent such things as she might enjoy, and, when her niece announced her demise, she begged that Waltham workers still write to her aunt's sister, who is over seventy, and asked that they send her some flower seeds, which she would plant and which would furnish flowers for her relative's grave. In the course of correspondence with a crippled woman, who rarely leaves the confines of a small room in a house in Arkansas, a Cambridge worker learned that the scarred bedstead, which stands before her eyes all day,

seemed to depress her. So she was sent some rose enamel paint with which to freshen the furniture. Her gratitude for it and the letter accompanying it was pathetic. It is a blessing that far distant friends can work together to help each other.

Your secretary hesitates to mention the number of articles sent, for after all one *thought* rightfully expressed in a letter may bring more to a correspondent than pounds of books or magazines or patch work scraps. Still it seems only fair to announce that once again the indefatigable chairman for the All Soul's Branch in New York City has distributed an almost unbelievable number of articles, and that the Alliance of the First Congregational Society of Providence, R. I., stands very creditably in the second place, with Brookline First, Hingham, Needham, Lexington and Newport, Rhode Island, following in the order given.

Cheerful Letter work still has its problems but because during this time of depression there is a tendency to stress difficulties at the expense of more constructive things, there will be no mention of them in this report. A formal consideration of the troubles, which workers meet, and the methods, which they pursue to overcome them, might well be undertaken at two or more regular meetings of the Exchange next year. Your secretary means this report to be mainly a record of progress and success.

There is no surer way to impress you with the value of your work than to let you know what some of your workers themselves feel about it. The chairman in the Brockton Alliance writes, "My report never satisfies me as I do not seem to be able to record the great good, which I know my committee do. All of them have kept their correspondents for years—one of them for twenty-seven years. That part of the work goes on so automatically that we keep no records. One of our greatest satisfactions is in helping a school teacher in Kentucky, who lacks equipment. She writes that

she has been complimented upon her school, the success of which she attributes largely to our assistance in sending her all kinds of school material." Your secretary could write a volume about the work, which many Branches do with teachers and their schools and the value of it. She digresses for a moment to tell you that a victrola and records sent by the committee of the Branch in Montclair, New Jersey to a mountain school in Kentucky have brought delight to a whole community, and a copy of *Reader's Digest* together with current news periodicals in Braille have brought unbounded joy to a blind correspondent.

The chairman for the Eliot Alliance of the Church of the Messiah, St. Louis, writes, "No doubt many other *Cheerful Letter* chairmen encounter the same heart breaking descriptions of abject poverty borne with fortitude by their correspondents. Therefore, I see what a great miracle working organization our General Alliance is. Its many Branches with unanimity of purpose to help and bring cheer into the lives of our less fortunate brothers and sisters is a God given blessing to humanity. With hearty wishes for the continued progress of our good *Cheerful Letter* work, I am your glad and willing co-worker." Here is a terse statement of the value of what you are striving to do. As you start your new year's work, bear in mind that you have the inspiration of working together with others all over the country with a common purpose, that coming together has meant a beginning; that keeping together has meant progress; that working together will mean limitless success.

Respectfully submitted,

ETHEL LANE HERSEY, *Secretary*.

When God gave to all men
All the earth to love
He gave them the waters under the sea,
He gave them the sky above;
And some love the waters,
And some love the sky;
But I love the tall ships
That go sailing by.—*Ethel E. Mannin*.

DO YOUR SLEEPING BEFORE MIDNIGHT

The proverb that "one hour's sleep before midnight is worth two hours' afterward" usually is ridiculed by physicians.

Most of them maintain that while eight hours' sleep is necessary at some time during the twenty-four it makes little difference when it is obtained.

A recent German investigation tends, however, to cast doubt on this medical opinion and to confirm the ancient proverb. Says Dr. E. E. Free, in his *Week's Science*:

Dr. Theodor Stöckmann, principal of a school in Duisburg, noticed that one of his pupils was falling behind in school work, and was becoming more and more lazy and sleepy.

Inquiring into this young man's sleep habits, Dr. Stöckmann found that he was studying late at night and sleeping late in the morning. Change of this habit so that the pupil slept before midnight and woke very early in the morning to study caused remarkable improvement in school work and in health.

Dr. Stöckmann then tested the same idea on seventeen other pupils, averaging about nineteen years old. All turned out to be in better health and to do better school work when they habitually got four or five hours' sleep before midnight and got up at three or four o'clock in the morning to do their studying.

Two pupils who worked part of the day also found themselves in better health and more successful in their studies when they went to bed immediately after supper and did their school work between midnight and dawn. His observations also suggest, Dr. Stöckmann reports to the German medical profession, that less than eight hours' sleep may be enough, at least for young people, provided all of it is obtained before midnight.

—*Literary Digest*.

The Bible is God's tool chest. It is one of these patent tool chests which contains every kind of tool.—*A. T. Pierson*.

A PRAYER

Oh Thou who art the Creator of all life, truth, love, wisdom and power; we, the children of thy life and love, lift our hearts to Thee in prayer, praise and adoration.

Give us such a vision of thy truth that our minds may be touched as by a coal from off thine altar. Give us such a sense of our duty that where there has been doubt, hesitation and waywardness there may be confidence and obedience.

In our ignorance we come to Thee for wisdom; in our weakness for strength; in our darkness for light. Rebuke us if we need rebuking. Humble us if we need humility. Keep us contrite in spirit until we are able and willing to acknowledge Thee in all our ways of thinking, speaking, believing and living.

Bless us as Thou alone knowest we individually need thy blessing. Bless those who are carrying too many and grievous burdens of care and responsibility; those whose strength is not equal to their task; those who are fighting against heavy odds; those who need help divine and those to whom we may be of any possible assistance in thought, word or deed.

Enlarge our vision of thy truth. Broaden our sympathy for our fellow-men. Deepen our faith in the world of unseen and eternal realities. Grant that we may live in the spirit of Jesus and in his spirit labor for the coming of thy Kingdom. *Amen.*

—Contributed.

Effective prayer depends on the sincere belief that praying will produce effects.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

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MISS EDITH L. JONES, *Treasurer*, 11 Dana Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Meetings at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. the first Friday of each month from October to May inclusive.

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

WHERE TO WRITE

Letters containing subscriptions to the paper, fifty cents a year, and money from the Sunshine Bags should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

Letters asking for correspondents and appeals to be printed in the Cheerful Letter Magazine should be sent to Mrs. John A. McCaddin, *Chairman*, 21 Ashfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Letters asking for help in studying at home, and requests from teachers and mothers who desire educational assistance, should be sent to Mrs. Charles P. Dillaby, 60 Aldworth Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries should be sent to Mrs. Henry R. Bowser, *Chairman*, 20 Clark Road, Wellesley Hills, Mass. A circulating Library will be started in any small community that is in need of one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references given.